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ABSTRACT

A 14% random sample of the 14,725 students enrolled for credit classes at the Center and South Campuses of Macomb County Community College (MCCC) in the Spring of 1971 completed a followup questionnaire in Fall of 1974. The usable response rate was 53%. Students' backgrounds at time of enrollment are given in terms of age, marital status, residency, and program enrollment. MCCC's impact on the students is discussed with respect to percentages receiving degrees and continuing their education. Nearly half of the students were eigher presently enrolled in higher education or had graduated from a four-year institution. Transfer students success at other two- and four-year schools show MCCC students to be well prepared; grade-point averages reveal remarkable consistency between performance at Macomb and the four-year transfer institutions. On the other side, 22% of working students felt there was no relationship between course work and present occupation. Recommendations drawn from the study call for improved job placement services, as well as the need for further studies of this type. A copy of the questionnaire is included along with tables representing student responses. (AH)

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Dr Alan Gross

Where Do All The Students Go?

The accountability movement in higher education may be fairly criticized; in trying to learn the cost of instruction, it has tended to slight the results of the educational process. Some of these results are unquestionably intangible; others are easier to grasp: The number of students who graduate, the number who are employed in an occupation related to their training. Results such as these may be gathered and analyzed by means of follow-up studies of former students. What such studies accomplish can be seen in a description and analysis of two efforts recently carried to their conclusion at Macomb County Community College.

In all follow-up studies, some replies are solicited, others are not. The unsolicited comments scribbled by former students in the margins of their questionnaires are in fact, one of the fringe benefits of such studies. One former student, who now translates foreign business communications for a local bank, thoughtfully suggested a program in foreign languages for business use. Another student, dissatisfied with the alternatives given for "present activities," added a box, checked it, and wrote beside it, "Just passing through."

Although some former students exhibited an unextinguishable individualism, most dutifully filled out their questionnaires in the proper fashion in a follow-up study conducted from September through December, 1974. These students represented a 14% random sample of the 14,725 students enrolled for credit classes at the Center and South Campuses (excluding Applied Technology) in the Spring of 1971. [1]

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Background

Before analyzing the follow-up data, it might be well to describe the kinds of students who were enrolled in Spring of 1971. Most were older than

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the average college freshman or sophomore: 50% were 23 or over. Younger students tended to attend in the day-time. In the evening at the Center Campus over 50% of the students were at least twenty-eight; at the South Campus 40% of the evening students were in this same age category (see chart I). Although the college was still a day-time school, its four hours of evening operation accommodated 46% of its student body.

Being Married

Being married was a strong deterent to college attendance. At South only one student in three was married; at Center this number was two students in five. Wives had even more difficulty than husbands: At South Campus only one in ten students was a married woman. Married people also were much more likely to be part-timers. At the South Campus, 49% of the part-time female students were married; the figure for full-timers was only 6%.

Residency

Three out of four students were county residents. The preponderance of non-residents (92%) were at the South Campus, with its close proximity to Wayne County.

Program Enrollment

Most students were enrolled in general academic (transfer) programs: 67% at South, 48% at Center. In Business Occupations the most popular programs were Accounting and Data Processing. In Vocational - Technical, Graphic and Commercial Arts and Electro-Technology were the most popular. The Associate program in nursing and public service programs in law enforcement and fire science attracted the most students at the Center Campus.

How Successful

How successful was the college with these students? (see chart II) Well, within the three and a half years between their enrollment and the survey, thirty-eight per cent had graduated from Macomb with a degree or a certificate. Numbers of graduates from South Campus in the vocation-technical division, and the Center Campus in business non-transfer, were considerably lower than average. However, this falling-off may reflect no more than a different set of needs: Specific courses, rather than degrees. This hypothesis seems especially confirmed at Center where, despite the low graduation rate, only 1% of the students in business non-transfer felt there was no relationship between their courses and their work. Center campus' allied health programs had a very high percentage of graduates, perhaps reflecting high admissions standards and the need for a degree prior to certification in nursing.

Twelve per cent of the students had graduated from a four-year institution within three and a half years - an impressive figure, representing as it does those who went straight through full-time. In addition, 26% had taken additional courses and 27% were presently enrolled in higher education. These figures mean that 47% - nearly half the students - were either presently enrolled in higher education or had graduated from a four-year institution. Finally, many former students maintain a continuing interest in higher education: 37% wanted current catalogues and 27% were planning to take courses in the near future. It is interesting that after nearly four years there was still a strong interest in a two-year college.

Of those enrolled in Spring, 1971, how many had returned for another semester by Fall, 1974? 63% at South campus, 64% at Center. Undoubtedly, some of those who did not return graduated, and some went on to transfer institutions. How many were in these two categories we do not know.

Another Side

There is another side to this picture: 22% of the students felt that there was no relationship between course work and present occupation. Moreover, if those who were looking for work and were not employed full-time represent the unemployed, then unemployment was 7% - and this figure precedes the recent rash of automobile plant layoffs.

Different Campuses

The survey also shows a clear difference between the two campuses. Center campus graduates more, but sends fewer on to a bachelor's degree. At Center campus also a smaller percentage feel there is no relationship between courses and present employment. These figures seem to reflect the greater vocational orientation of the Center Campus and the response bias in favor of occupational programs in the sample.

Follow-up of Transfer Students

Concurrent with this general follow-up study was one that concentrated on students who transferred from Macomb's Center Campus to other institutions of higher education. The performance of students who transferred to four-year colleges and universities seemed highly respectable. The range of the G.P.A. differential from +.06 to -.33 indicated a remarkable consistency between performance at Macomb and the four-year transfer institutions (see chart III).

Acceptance of credits earned at Macomb by four-year, transfer institutions was consistently high with the exception of Eastern Michigan University. The significantly lower acceptance rate at Eastern Michigan University coupled with the largest G.P.A. differential (-.33) may indicate that less academically capable students gravitate toward this institution.

The performance of MCCC students who transferred to two-year colleges was also very respectable with an overall G.P.A. differential of +.14. The acceptance of credit earned at Macomb was low compared to acceptance by the four-year institutions. Inspection of individual records indicated that the lower acceptance rate was largely due to changes in students' majors which resulted in substantial loss of credit hours when the transfer institution had no comparable curriculum.

The results of this last study may be profitably compared with those of an earlier analysis (see chart IV). Although not directly comparable because of differences in methods and sampling procedures, the data from this earlier analysis of transfer students (completed July, 1971) also indicates a remarkable consistency between student G.P.A. at Macomb and subsequent performance at four-year institutions (range of G.P.A. differential = +.06 to -.12). One difference between the results of the two studies is the higher level of the G.P.A. earned at both Macomb and the transfer institutions in the latest (December, 1974) study.

Conclusions and Recommendations

These three efforts at follow-up are sufficient reason for justifiable pride in college accomplishments - quality instruction and good management. Nevertheless, areas needing improvement may be singled out for special attention. For instance, the study seems to indicate that job placement services could be improved and that former students are likely candidates for recruitment efforts. At the present time, Macomb is improving its job placement services through the Southeastern Michigan League of Community Colleges. Moreover, the college now recruits former students on a regular basis. However, Macomb's justifiable pride should be tempered by the fact that six out of ten who enroll are not given educational certification by the college.

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These three follow-up studies - however worthwhile - are imcomplete in three significant ways. First, they have not been done with a regularity which would justify general conclusions and would enable the college to chart trends reliable enough for management purposes. Secondly, no comparison with other state or national institutions is possible, partly because of the dearth of follow up studies of this sort, and partly because of a lack of uniformity in data collection which makes comparisons possible. Finally, the latest study of transfer students is incomplete because of constricting confidentiality rules. Fortunately, the Buckley Amendment to the Education Amendments of 1974 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act legitmatizes the activities of responsible researchers who must use student records. According to this new law "organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of ...improving instruction [may receive such data], if such studies are conducted in such a manner as will not permit the personal identification of students and their parents by persons other than representatives of such organizations and such information will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purpose for which it is conducted." It is hoped that this legitimatization impels colleges and universities to revise their confidentiality regulations so that transfer studies may be done routinely and with a minimum of effort. Wayne State University's guidelines on this point form an excellent model for state-wide implementation.

Orginal

Alumni Questionnaire

Social Security No. ☐☐☐-☐☐-☐☐☐☐

1. Check all that apply.

- ☐ I graduated from Macomb
- ☐ I graduated from another community college
- ☐ I graduated from a senior college or university
- ☐ I completed courses at a Technical or Business school
- ☐ I completed an employer training program
- ☐ I completed a technical training program in the military
- ☐ I have not graduated or completed training, but I have taken additional courses
- ☐ I have not graduated or completed training, but I plan to take courses in the near future

2. What are you doing now? (Check as many as apply)

- ☐ I'm enrolled at a community college, senior college, or university
- ☐ I'm working full-time
- ☐ I'm looking for a job
- ☐ I'm in the service
- ☐ I'm a full-time housewife

3. If you are working or looking for a job were the courses you took related to your employment?

- ☐ The courses were directly related to my occupation
- ☐ The courses may be helpful in my job, but they weren't directly related
- ☐ There is no relationship between my courses and my employment

4. Could Macomb be of service to you now?

- ☐ I would like a current catalog of programs
- ☐ I would like attitude and interest testing

Suggested Revision

Alumni Questionnaire

Social Security No. ☐☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

1. What are you doing now? (Check as many as apply) Since my enrollment in Fall, 1971:

- ☐ I graduated from Macomb with a certificate
- ☐ I graduated from Macomb with a degree
- ☐ I graduated from a senior college or university
- ☐ I graduated from a senior college or university and am now enrolled in a graduate program
- ☐ I transferred to a senior college or university, am NOT enrolled now, and did not graduate
- ☐ I transferred to a senior college or university, am enrolled now, but have not graduated
- ☐ I am still enrolled at Macomb

2. What is your employment status?

- ☐ I am employed full-time
- ☐ I am employed part-time
- ☐ I am unemployed

3. If you are working were the courses you took related to your employment? (Check one)

- ☐ All courses were related to my employment
- ☐ Most courses were related to my employment
- ☐ Some courses were related to my employment
- ☐ Few courses were related to my employment
- ☐ No courses were related to my employment

4. Could Macomb be of service to you now?

- ☐ I would like a current catalog of programs

☐ I would like veteran's information

☐ I would like information on the Women's Resource Center

☐ I would like information on the Senior Citizens Program

Chart I

Distribution of Campus Students-Day and Evening

Age Ranges	Center % day	Center % evening	South % day	South % evening
over 37	11%	23%	17%	12%
33 - 37	7%	12%	10%	10%
28 - 32	9%	20%	14%	20%
23 - 27	11%	20%	15%	33%
21 - 22	17%	9%	13%	13%
18 - 20	44%	15%	31%	12%
17 and under	1%	1%	1%	0%
	100%	100%	101%*	100%

*Discrepancy due to rounding.

Chart II

Tabulation of Follow-up Questionnaire (Spring, 1971)

Statements from follow-up questionnaire	Total Institution	South Campus	Center Campus	S.C. Vocational	S.C. General Education	S.C. Business Non-transfer	C.C. General Education	C.C. Business Non-transfer	C.C. Public Service	C.C. Allied Health
I graduated from Mason	36%	36%	44%	29%	39%	34%	39%	15%	43	77
I graduated from a senior college or university	12%	13%	8%	8%	16%	7%	17%	0%	6	0
I have not graduated, but have taken additional courses	26%	25%	26%	23%	26%	27%	20%	38%	33	4
I am enrolled at a community college, senior college or university	35%	36%	30%	33%	39%	24%	28%	31	36	23
Graduated from senior college or enrolled in higher education (2 and 4 combined)	47%	48%	38	---	---	---				
Courses were directly related to my occupation or were helpful if not directly related	65%	65%	68	72%	61%	72%	51%	69%	75%	82
I have not graduated or completed training, but I plan to take courses in the near future	27	28	22%	30%	25%	35%	48%	31%	22%	14
I would like a current catalog of programs	37%	39%	31	---	---	---				
There is no relationship between my courses and my employment	22%	23%	13%	2%	25%	19%	7%	1%	4%	2
I am looking for a job (unemployed)	7%	---								

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Chart III

A Follow-up Study of Transfer Students from Center Campus 1972-73, Completed December, 1974.[2]

Term	Number of Students In Sample	MCCC GPA*	Transfer Institution GPA*	GPA Differential	Percent of MCCC Hours Accepted by T.I.
Wayne State 1972-73	103	3.14	2.92	-.22	97.7%
Oakland Univ. 1972-73	83	3.00	3.06	+.06	91.3%
Central Mich. Univ. 1972-73	29	3.01	Not Available	Not Available	88.7%
Eastern Mich. Univ. 1972-73	23	2.83	2.50	-.33	78.8%
Walsh College 1972-73	23	3.02	2.72	-.30	97.9%
Northern Mich. Univ. 1972-73	20	2.80	2.65	-.15	93.6%
Other 4-year Coll./ Univ. with 10 or less transfer students each	(14 colls. included) 44	3.04	2.75	-.29	95.3%
2 year colleges with 10 or less transfer students each	(10 colls. included) 25	2.97	3.11	+.14	71.9%

*Weighted Average for all students in each sample.

Chart IV

Transfer Analysis of MCCC Students Attending Four-Year Universities, Fall 1969 - Spring 1971, Completed July, 1971.[3]

Term	Number of Students In Sample	MCCC GPA*	Transfer Institution GPA*	GPA Differential	Percent of MCCC Hours Accepted by T.I.
Wayne State Univ. Spring, 1970	33	2.66	2.57	-.09	85.5%
Wayne State Univ. Winter 1970	30	2.44	2.50	+.06	85.6%
Oakland Univ. Feb., 1970	34	3.09	2.97	-.12	93.7%
Eastern Mich. Univ. Spring, 1971	16	2.38	2.39	+.01	92.7%

*Weighted Average for all students in each sample.

Footnotes

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[1] Three mailings elicited a total usable response rate of 53% - a fair enough sample if there was no significant evidence of bias.

And there was practically no evidence of bias:

Comparison of sample and total population by campus and program

South Campus

	Sample	Total Population
South Campus	84%	81%
General Education	66%	67%
Business	17%	14%
Vocational technical	18%	19%

Center Campus

	Sample	Total Population
Center Campus	16%	19%
General education	35%	48%
Business	8%	10%
Public service	43%	29%
Allied health	14%	14%

Comparison of sample and total population by sex by campus

	Sample	Total Population
Male (South Campus)	64%	68%
Female (South Campus)	36%	32%
Male (Center Campus)	52%	51%
Female (Center Campus)	48%	49%

There was some imbalance at the Center Campus: General education was underrepresented in the sample, public service overrepresented. Moreover, at the South Campus, there was a sample bias in favor of women. These biases must be taken into consideration when statistics they effect are presented.

[2]The sample included all students at the Center Campus who requested transcripts be sent to colleges and universities for the months of May-August of 1972 and 1973, and who actually registered for one or more term. Confidentiality rules account for the lack of data from Michigan State and Western Michigan and the incomplete data from Central. The research design and data collection were the responsibility of Michael Foster of the Office of the Registrar.

[3]The samples were drawn from a list of MCCC transfer students actually registered at the various institutions. Includes Center and South Campus students.

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